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ABSTRACT

The Lower East Side Preparatory School's main goal was to provide basic educational requirements for graduation with improved self-image among students who are dropouts/returnees from the lower east side. Because of the school's location it included the Chinatown area. The student population consisted principally of dropouts with poor academic skills from public high schools, below the age of 21, living in the lower east side community, 60 percent of whom were of Chinese ethnic background and who fell below high school levels in grade equivalency on a standardized testing of reading comprehension. Average class size was 15 students. Students received guidance services of the Community Liaison worker staff. Students were provided with additional tutoring, visits to cultural and business organizations, and other special activities. A student who remained at the Urban Prep School through his course of study, would receive full credit toward his diploma from a cooperating public high school or from the Dalton school. The student population was 98, 95, and 84 during the three semesters respectively. Learning laboratory facilities were provided utilizing multimediated and programmed instructional materials. Major subjects were: English, language arts, social studies, mathematics, and sciences. (Author/JM)

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LOWER EAST SIDE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

1972-1973

Board of Education of the
City of New York

FINAL REPORT

UD C14408

FINAL REPORT

LOWER EAST SIDE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

An evaluation of a New York City School district educational project funded by the New York State Urban Education Program enacted at the 1971 legislative session of the New York State Legislature for the purpose of "meeting special educational needs associated with poverty" (Chapter 685, Section 9, subdivision 11, laws of 1969, performed under contract with the Board of Education of the City of New York for the 1972-73 school year).

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Chapter I

I. Program Description

The Lower East Side Preparatory School's main goal is to provide basic educational requirements for graduation with improved self-image among students who are dropouts/returnees from the lower east side. Because of the school's location it includes the Chinatown area. This particular program was recycled from a six-year funding projection under a grant from the New York State Urban Education-Incentive Programs.

The lower east side community, including Chinatown, has continued to function under a large influx of non-English speaking immigrants, who came to New York City in the late 1960's and are continuing to come, with limited skills. Their failure to cope with the conventional institutional structures in society is the result of the large number of high school dropouts. Five persistent needs of this population have continued to be identified with the Lower East Side Preparatory School:

1. The need for a positive, supportive educational environment which is not antagonistic to their cultural background and values;
2. The need to develop communication skills, in order to speak, read, and write effectively;
3. The need to develop self-confidence and competency in setting goals, solving problems, and making decisions;
4. The need to acquire knowledge of vocational options applicable to their goals;
5. The need to acquire an understanding of how society functions at various levels in significant areas, such as economics and politics.

Site

The Lower East Side Preparatory School is located at 11 John Street, New York, N.Y. The school is on the sixth floor of an old, high ceiling, airy, business building. Offices were converted into classrooms which are small but sufficient for the purpose, since each class has about 15 students.

Staffing

The following persons constitute the full-time staff of the Urban Prep School together with their principal duties:

- 1 - Guidance Director. The Guidance Director is called on to assist in student appraisal, evaluation and scheduling of classes, information distribution to student body, guidance and counseling (both group and individual) and some follow-up work.

- 1 - Teacher-Coordinator (Certificate of Competency). Links the two public home high schools with the Urban Prep School; maintains permanent records; helps develop curricula.
- 5 - Teachers (Certificate of Competency). Teach four periods daily, tutor learners; set up (under direction) individualized study program.
- 3 - Community Liaison Workers ("Street Workers") (funded privately). Investigate applicants for the Prep School in the community; perform home visits; follow up absences and cutting; performs on-going counseling and personal guidance.
- 1 - School Secretary. Maintains school records; handles telephone, correspondence, reception, types, transcribes, distributes, runs duplicating equipment.
- 1 - Director (privately funded). Is chief administrative officer for the Prep School to whom all others report; maintains liaison with the Board of Education, private funding agencies and community agencies; compiles budgets; and reports to the Executive Director of Break Free, Incorporated.
- 1 - Assistant Director (privately funded). Handles school purchases, supervises standardized testing program, processes staff personnel records and time sheets, and reports to the Director.

The two administrators (Director and Assistant Director) and the Teacher-Coordinator each directly teach one course per trimester. Guidance as a decentralized function, is performed by Street Workers, teaching staff, administrators and teacher-coordinator.

Part-time personnel include the college advisor, a bookkeeping auditor and the custodian -- all funded privately. There are also several unpaid or volunteer community tutors and a student-teacher from Pratt Institute who runs the art program on an unpaid basis, but receive special college credits.

Materials

Learning laboratory facilities utilizing multimediated and programmed instructional materials.

Student Population

Principally dropouts with poor academic skills from public high schools, below the age of 21, living in the lower east side community, 60 percent of whom are of Chinese ethnic background and who fall below high school levels in grade equivalency on a standardized testing of reading comprehension, constitute the population of student participants. Every applicant for admission is tested in reading and mathematics as an admission requirement, and retested thereafter at the beginning and ending of every school year. This testing employed the Advanced Metropolitan Achievement Test Battery (1970 edition).

Average class size proposed in funding request was 15 students. Students receive guidance services under the supervision of the Community Liaison worker staff ("Street Workers"). It was also proposed that students be provided with additional tutoring, visits to cultural and business organizations, and other special activities. A student who remained at the Urban Prep School through his course of study, it was proposed, would receive full credit toward his diploma from a cooperating public high school or from the Dalton School.

The total student population did not vary considerably during the three semesters. The student population was 98, 95, and 84 during the three semesters respectively. The variability during any semester can be attributed to severe illness, death and dropout.

Curriculum

Student participants take part in a program having the following six principal features:

1. The prep school has an associated structured program of three trimesters per academic year of approximately 14 weeks each whose primary aim is credit toward graduation:

September - November, 1972
December, 1972 - March, 1973
April - June, 1973

2. A typical student's daily schedule is from 8:15 A.M. to 1:25 P.M., thus enabling the many who must hold part-time jobs to do so. Experimental variations for more advanced students would be considered.
3. Major subjects are:
 - English
 - Language Arts
 - Social Studies
 - Mathematics
 - Sciences
4. Each student would normally have seven periods daily, five major subjects, one tutorial class, and one elective, such as calligraphy, cultural history, photography, psychology, sociology, art, typing.
5. Periods are 40 minutes in length. The following is a typical program for a student:

Period 1	-- English
2	-- Mathematics
3	-- Sciences
4	-- Tutorial
5	-- Language
6	-- Social Studies
7	-- Electives

Chapter II

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Objective 1

To continue to implement the Prep School's structured program and innovative curricular components in its informal setting, featuring small seminar-type classrooms with faculty-student ratio under 15 to 1, open-door policy to all school services and administrators who also teach classes. The education goals of this structured program is aimed at academic rehabilitation, consisting of credits toward graduation with a comprehensive high school diploma. The academic program as recognized by the accredited cooperating high schools where student permanent records are maintained will be the equivalent of 5 major subject courses, 1 tutorial course, and 1 elective course.

An important part of this academic program will be the complete utilization of a learning laboratory facility utilizing multimediated and programmed instructional materials.

Supplementary community-to-school services will continue to be rendered the entire student body of dropout/returnees under the supervision of Community Liaison Works known as "Street Workers."

Objective 2

To provide all non-English speaking or bilingual students in the Prep School with instruction that will result in marked gain in proficiency in English of one-third or more over their entering scores by means of a professionally developed experimental English language set of proficiency measures for English-as-a Second Language students administered on a before-to-after instruction basis by the teacher-coordinator.

Objective 3

To provide an educational program that will result in at least 40 percent improvement in attendance for first year Prep School students compared to the attendance of these same students in their last academic year in the large metropolitan high school, by examination of attendance records of the high school of origin maintaining the permanent records of the returnees and those of the Prep School. For second and third year students at the Prep School, rate of attendance will not differ significantly from that of their first or second year at the Prep School, and will conform to the rules for attendance promulgated by the administration of the Prep School.

Objective 4

To continue an educational program that will enable dropout/returnees to manifest an improvement of 25 percent to 50 percent in academic achieve-

ment in every subject area as measured by achievement tests locally developed by each subject-matter teacher, and administered on a before-to-after basis.

These same students will show also statistically significant rate of improvement in reading and in mathematics as shown on the revised Metropolitan 1970 Achievement Tests, Advanced Form, administered on a pre-program to post-program basis in the school year 1972-73.

Objective 5

To enable dropout/returnees to make progress toward their high school comprehensive diplomas by acquisition of from 40 percent to 60 percent more high school credits toward graduation as compared to the number of credits acquired by these same students during the last academic year of their attendance in the large public metropolitan high school. Prep School students continuing on for a second or third year will maintain a level of credit acquisition equivalent to that achieved in this alternative school during their first or second years, and in conformity with the rules for continuation promulgated by the administration of the Prep School.

Chapter III

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND PROCEDURES

Description of Scope Organization, and Implementation of Program

Evaluation Objective 1

Included in this aspect of the evaluation were an assessment of student attitudes, teacher attitudes, and statements made by administrators, street-workers and community agency personnel. School records and documents were also reviewed. Interviews were conducted with administrators, teachers, street workers and other staff during six visits to the school to meet with faculty. A biographical data form was administered to the staff members so as to provide a summary description of the academic experiences the staff brought to the situation. The students were surveyed through questionnaires regarding their attitudes toward attending the Prep School. All facilities and curricular materials were examined in detail. Descriptive analysis based on the above activities are presented in the next chapter.

Where appropriate, frequency of response and content analysis are presented by means of tables with descriptions. Student responses to questionnaires are reported in number and percentages. The number of students who were present in classes when the questionnaires were administered was 74. Not all students responded to every item or question asked. The number of responses for each item ranged from 68 to 71. Since new students enroll and leave the program at the beginning and end of each of the trimesters the total number was not constant. However, during the period Teaching & Learning Research Corp. was the approved contracting evaluation agency, the total official enrollment was around 100 students. For a description of the number of new and returning students during the period of the evaluation, see page 13. (Final approval for Teaching & Learning Research Corp. to evaluate the program was obtained in March, 1973.)

Staff personnel views and biographical information are descriptively presented resulting from a content analysis of the in-depth interviews conducted.

In addition to teachers, administrators and other staff personnel from the Prep School, personnel from "Break Free," the community agency most directly involved with the Lower East Side Preparatory School project, were interviewed. The results of the interviews are presented in Chapter IV.

Instrumentation

The students in the Lower East Side Preparatory School project were asked to respond to a series of questions designed to tap their attitudes toward their teachers, administrator and other staff personnel in the program. (See Appendix A.) The statistical analyses of this data will consist of the number of student responses to each item, frequency distributions and percentages.

The staff personnel were also asked to complete a biographical data form. (See Appendix B.) The biographical data form was utilized to provide descriptive statements regarding the academic experiences of the staff. In addition, the staff personnel were administered in-depth interviews designed to assess their attitudes regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the program as well as assess their recommendations for the Prep School program. (See Appendix C.)

The administrators of the Lower East Side Preparatory School were also interviewed regarding their views of the goals of the program as well as the problems encountered in implementing these goals. (See Appendix D.) In addition, the goals as specified by administrators in their funding request were examined. There was no apparent distinction between the goals the administrators expressed for the program in statements to Teaching & Learning Research Corp's evaluation staff and the program goals specified in their funding request. These goals are stated in Chapter 1.

Increase in English Proficiency

Evaluation Objective 2

One criterion for success specified in the Evaluation Design prepared by the Bureau of Educational Research was that there be a 33 percent gain among 90 percent or more of the students continually available in the program in English proficiency -- as measured by a professionally developed experimental English language proficiency set of measures for English-as-a-Second Language students, administered on a before-to-after instruction basis. The instrument for assessing this English proficiency was the English as a Second Language Test used by the New York Public Schools. The test was administered at the beginning and end of the school year to students in the program. The total number of students tested was 45, of whom there were 15 students present for both pre and post testing. The second criterion of success in improving English proficiency was for the students to show significant improvement.

Two types of analyses were performed: a statistical test (t test for correlated data) to assess whether there was a significant gain for the students as a group, with alpha set at the .05 level; and a determination of the proportion of students who improved 33 percent or more. The means and standard deviations are reported to assist in interpretation. Means, standard deviation, t test values and N 's are reported in Chapter IV.

Improvement in Attendance

Evaluation Objective 3

This study assessed the extent to which the Lower East Side Preparatory School provided first year dropout/returnees not in attendance during the preceding year with an educational program sufficient to result in at least a 40 percent improvement in their attendance rate in the 1972-1973 school year. Attendance for 1971-1972 was compared to attendance in 1972-1973.

The data was obtained from the students' attendance records through the cooperation of the public school and the LESP staff. Many students, particularly those from China and elsewhere did not have previous data records available.

Method and Procedures

Following examination and recording of the cooperating high school and Prep School attendance records for those students in their first year of the Prep School program, student attendance was analyzed statistically. Average percentage of days absent and standard deviations were calculated and listed for comparative rates of absence for the two comparison years. A correlated t test was employed with alpha set at the .05 level. The hypothesis tested was that improved and statistically significant differences in attendance between the two compared school years would result.

Improvement in Achievement in Subject Areas

Evaluation Objective 4

Student achievement data were used to assess whether there was a 25 percent to 50 percent improvement in academic achievement in each of the major subject areas, as determined by locally developed subject matter tests. The tests were produced by subject teachers at the Prep School and administered on a before-to-after course basis.

It was hypothesized that the students would also manifest statistically significant improvements in reading ability as determined by the revised Metropolitan 1970 Achievement Test, Advanced Form. Testing was done by school personnel early Fall 1972, and near the end of the Spring 1973 school year.

Method and Procedures

Locally developed "in-house" tests were given at the start of each course or subject year, and again at its conclusion in order to determine the extent of student progress made through the duration of course content. Improvements of 25 percent to 50 percent were hypothesized for each subject. It was also hypothesized (and tested with correlated t tests) that there would be a statistically significant improvement on the MAT tests. Alpha level was set at the .05 level of confidence. The means, standard deviations and t test value are reported in Chapter IV. It was also planned to compare Metropolitan Achievement scores for the current school year with similar scores on students from permanent records at the cooperating high schools. Such data were not available in sufficient number of make appropriate statistical tests of difference between validly comparable information.

Progress in Credit Acquisition for Graduation

Evaluation Objective 5

A comparison was made to determine how many students acquired at least 40 percent more credits toward graduation during 1972-73 as compared to the number of credits acquired by the same students during their last year of academic record in the public cooperating high school where their permanent records for 1971-72 were maintained.

Method and Procedures

The number of courses the students passed and received credit for during 1972-73 were compared to the number of courses that the same students passed and received credit for in their last year of record while in the metropolitan public high school before dropping out (year 1971-72). The basic unit for course credit evaluation was adapted from the Carnegie Unit acceptable to the State Education Department of the University of the State of New York for graduation. It was expected that students remaining to the end of the academic year would acquire at least 40 percent more credits during the 1972-73 school year than they did during their preceding year of record in public high schools. Means and standard deviations were calculated and were reported along with correlated t-test. Statistically significant differences were expected between the record at the Prep School and the cooperating public high school. Analysis of student differences by time in program yielded no significant differences (correlated t tests, $p < .05$ each). Hence all 85 students were included in the Lower East Side Preparatory School current absentee status study.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS

Description of Scope, Organization and Extent of Implementation

Objective 1:

After Teaching & Learning Research Corp. was approved by the Board of Education to conduct this evaluation study at the Lower East Side Preparatory School, six on-site visits were made, the school records were examined, and interviews were held with all staff present and available. In addition, all students were administered a questionnaire. It was observed that the students in the LESP were being provided with five required major subject areas of study, one tutorial course and one elective course each. The subject areas were:

1. English
2. Language Arts
3. Social Studies
4. Mathematics
5. Science

The major elective areas were:

1. Calligraphy
2. Cultural History
3. Photography
4. Psychology
5. Sociology

Approximately 60 percent of the students were of oriental background of whom many were only recently from China or Hong Kong.

Student Attitudes

Students were surveyed through questionnaires regarding their attitudes toward several aspects of the LESP. The students were asked to respond to questions about their teachers, administrators and school in general as shown in Table 1.

There were 74 students present and surveyed when the school was visited in April, 1973 for this purpose.

The attitudes expressed by the students about the teachers were generally quite favorable. Only 1.5 percent of those students interviewed indicated that they felt their teachers did not want to help them. The vast majority of students (87.1 percent) said they felt that their teachers do want to help the student. The remaining 11.4 percent said that their teachers wanted to help them some of the time. Only 2.9 percent of the students indicated that

their teachers were not really interested in them. The remaining students indicated that they felt the teacher was interested only some of the time (36.7 percent) and the majority of the student (60.4 percent) indicated they felt the teachers were concerned about the students.

Table 1

Student Attitudes Toward Teachers in the Lower East Side Preparatory School

Item	Yes		Sometimes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
The teachers in this school want to help you.	61	87.1	8	11.4	1	1.5
The teachers in this school expect you to work too hard.	21	30.0	31	44.2	18	25.8
The teachers in this school are really interested in you.	41	60.4	25	36.7	2	2.9
The teachers in this school know how to explain things clearly.	45	64.2	21	30.1	4	5.7
The teachers in this school are fair and square.	44	61.9	20	28.3	7	9.8
The boys and girls in this school fight too much.	2	2.8	1	1.5	67	95.7
This school building is a pleasant place.	35	50.7	7	10.2	27	39.1
The principal in this school is friendly.	45	64.2	17	24.4	8	11.4

The number of students responding to each individual item ranged from 68 to 71.

As shown in Table 2, the attitudes expressed by the students about the school environment and the value of their educational experience also were quite supportive of the LESP project.

The majority of students (62.8 percent) indicated that they felt they learned more this year than any earlier year, while only 12.8 percent felt that this was not the case with them. The remainder (24.4 percent) indicated they felt this was true for them some of the time. The majority of students also indicated that they plan to go on to college (81.5 percent). Only 5.7 percent of the students stated they did not intend to go to college and 12.8 percent of the students stated that they sometimes think they might go to college.

Importantly, no one interviewed indicated that they would like to see the program discontinued. Ninety percent (91.4 percent) stated they would like to see the program continued and only 8.6 percent said only sometimes do they want to see the program continued for others.

Table 2

Student Attitudes Toward the School Environment in the Lower East Side Preparatory School

Item	Yes		Sometimes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
The work at this school is too hard.	3	4.2	40	56.4	28	39.4
What I am learning will be useful to me.	50	70.5	17	23.9	4	5.6
I wish I didn't have to go to school at all.	6	8.5	17	23.9	48	67.6
This is the best school I know.	32	45.8	16	22.8	22	31.4
The work at this school is too easy.	3	4.3	38	54.2	29	41.5
I work hard in school but don't seem to get anywhere.	6	8.5	14	20.1	50	71.4
I've learned more this year than any earlier year.	44	62.8	17	24.4	9	12.8
When I graduate from high school I intend to go college.	57	81.5	9	12.8	4	5.7
I would like to have this program continued to help other dropout students like me.	64	91.4	6	8.6	0	0.0

The number of students responding to each item ranged from 70 to 71.

In summary, the data in Tables 1 and 2 show that the students in the LESP school project seemed to feel that the teachers and administrators in the program were interested and concerned about them. Also they seemed to feel that the educational environment they experienced in the LESP project was beneficial to them. From the student perspective, the LESP school is functioning in accord with program objective 1 to develop a positive educational attitude on the part of the students served in the 1972-73 school year.

On-Site Observations: Implementation of Proposed Functions

On the basis of on-site visits, it was observed that the LESP school generally functioned in accord with official funding request program descriptions presented in Chapter I. For example, the program is its third year -- recycled for the dropouts of the lower east side community. There were 85 students enrolled in the school during the third trimester, the period TLRC was approved as the evaluation agency, 54 were of Chinese ethnic background (many of whom had newly arrived in the United States). In the third semester of the 85 students, at the time of the on-site visit, 58 students were returnees. From the previous semesters, 27 were newly admitted during the third semester.

The program operated during the hours of 8:15 A.M. to 1:25 P.M. The school year was divided into three terms of approximately 14 weeks each:

September - November, 1972
December, 1972 - March, 1973
April - June, 1973

The subjects and services offered were observed to be the same as described in Chapter I.

The average class size ranged from 9 to 15 students, usually kept below 15 students in each class. Each period was 40 minutes.

New students were enrolled in the beginning of each term, and students also left -- graduated -- at the end of each term. The students were deemed on the basis of record reviews to be former dropouts or students with records of high potential for being a dropout, i.e. high absenteeism, etc.

Classes appeared to be well conducted to the evaluation staff, with the students exhibiting interest. The teachers appeared knowledgeable on the problems and background of their students, and often were able to communicate in both English and Chinese, or Spanish to help their students in their subjects.

The school is on the sixth floor of a business building, though quite light and airy, classrooms were small. There are no gym facilities, no laboratories, no library, or other recreational places, and space is rather limited even though the student body was small.

The director of the school, the guidance counselor, teachers, and other staff seem to be very interested in the students' well being, and they seemed to work hard attempting to carry out the program according to the proposal plan. They were reasonably cooperative in assisting the evaluation staff in gathering questionnaires and school records data and other information which was needed once TLRC was approved as the evaluation agency.

The curriculum materials observed during visits seemed appropriate for the students but, of course, a more definitive assessment depends upon the attainment of major objectives for increasing subject matter proficiency, decreasing absenteeism and demonstrating student progression toward graduation.

Personnel Attitudes

In-depth interviews with teachers, administrators, streetworkers and other staff personnel of the Lower East Side Preparatory School revealed that there was a wide variety of attitudes about the LESP school project. This information was obtained through questionnaires. (See Appendices B and C.)

Strengths

Attitudes expressed about the strong points of the program ranged from statements about the organization of the program to statements about the type of interpersonal relationships that could be developed in the program. Many of the staff indicated that a strong point of the program was the small classrooms enabling close contact with and supervision of the student. Still others were of the opinion that the trimester system was a valuable instructional component in the development of a positive educational attitude in students. The organizational characteristics of the LESP project were also expressed quite frequently as one of the strong points of this program. Some project personnel found the easy accessibility of administrators quite valuable, others felt that the potential adaptability of the curriculum was one of the program's strong points. Still others indicated that the non-traditional atmosphere of the LESP project was one of the strengths of the program. Still other project personnel stated that a major strength of the program was the nature of interpersonal relationships which made it possible to "create a willing student." Other personnel similarly felt that the student-teacher relationship in class was most important, others indicated that the teacher-student activities outside of the classroom were most important, still others felt it was the streetworker program which led to a positive educational environment for the student.

Whereas there was no specifically focused consensus on the major strengths of the program, attitudes and opinions expressed by teachers, administrators, streetworkers and other project personnel appear to fall into three rather broad categories: 1) the physical facilities of the LESP project, 2) the organizational characteristics of the program, and 3) the nature of teacher-student relationships developed in this type of program.

Weaknesses

These same in-depth interviews with LESP project personnel also revealed some negative attitudes about the program. Again there was little specific consensus about this program. However, staff perspectives, expressed to TLRC personnel did seem to fall into two rather broad categories: a concern about a lack of facilities such as a lack of gym equipment, and the lack of a science laboratory or library facilities. These attitudes expressed appear to center around the lack of facilities, but it should be noted once again that there was very little consensus about just what facilities were lacking. Other attitudes expressed about weaknesses in the program included statements about the lack of objectives in the formulation of curriculum and the lack of mutual support and encouragement among the faculty.

Personnel Recommendations

The personnel of the LESP project also made several recommendations for this program. Once again there was a wide range of responses indicating a lack of consensus about what should be done for the program. This diversity of opinion about what should be done for the program is undoubtedly related to the wide range of attitudes concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The teacher and staff personnel recommendations included recommendations for a different location, more equipment, and more staff personnel. Others recommended increased parental involvement in the program, e.g., PTA meetings. While others recommended communication and mutual support and encouragement among the faculty, still others recommended better communication between staff and administration, more dynamic and effective leadership, enlarged curriculum offerings, or more students.

This wide diversity of opinion regarding recommendations for the LESP project suggest that there was no single major weakness in the program from the perspective of the teachers and other program personnel. Further, many of the recommendations are indications of the project staff's satisfaction with the program. That is, several recommendations such as increased enrollment or enlarged curriculum offerings suggest satisfaction with the program and increasing the scope of its activities. Also, the lack of consensus among teacher, administrator and other staff personnel pertaining to the major weaknesses of the project suggest once again that there was no single major weakness in the program from the perspective of the teacher. Further, the teacher, administrator and other staff personnel expressed the opinion that they felt the strengths of the program centered around the program organization, certain physical facilities, and the interpersonal relationships developed to provide for a program which created a positive educational attitude on the part of students served in the 1972-73 school year.

A survey of the staff regarding biographical information indicated that one-half of the teachers had been with the LESP project for one year or less. The remaining fifty percent had been with the project either two or more years. The staff responding indicated that six persons had one year's experience,

five had two year's experience and two had three year's experience. The fields of specialization of the teaching staff were varied and included: counseling, philosophy, biology, French, American and European History, art, mechanical engineering and sociology. In addition, most teachers had academic training beyond the Bachelor of Arts degree. Eleven of the staff indicated that they had completed their master's degree or advanced graduate work.

Community Agency

Personnel from Break Free the community agency most closely associated with the LESP project were also questioned to ascertain their attitudes about the strong and weak aspects of the Prep School program. The results indicated that the Community Board of Directors was one of the strengths of the program. Further, it was felt that small classes and a mutual respect between the students and the staff are factors which made the program very strong. Also noted was the activity of the streetworker staff in getting parental involvement and creating a proper educational attitude on the part of the students.

The community agency personnel also indicated what they thought were the weakest aspects of the school. Cited were the lack of finances, materials and equipment. It should be noted that these statements are not criticisms of the program but indications of what they would like to expand in the program. Also cited as a weak aspect of the program was that "the student body was too small." This suggests that community agency personnel feel the program was a success and would like to expand this educational opportunity to more members of the community. Corresponding to this latter attitude expressed by the community agency personnel was a recommendation that the size of the facility be expanded.

Increasing English Proficiency

Objective 2:

The data in Table 3 indicate that there was a statistically significant increase ($p < .05$ level) in English proficiency on the English as a Second Language Test. Hence, one criterion of program success, that of showing statistically significant gains (at the .05 level) was observed.

Table 3

Pre and Post Achievement Levels in English of English as a Second Language Students

	Pre		Post		t
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	
N = 15					
Language Proficiency	32.27	3.43	50.98	2.23	6.62*

*Statistically significant $p .05$

This test was administered by the LESP staff during the first semester only.

Table 4

English Grades Correlated between the Final Grades in High School and Final
Grades at LESP

	Pre		Post		<u>t</u>
	<u>X</u>	S.D.	<u>X</u>	S.D.	
N = 22					
English	70.16	13.77	81.66	4.53	4.04*

*Statistically significant.

This correlation between final grades of students in the third semester and their final grades during their last year at their respective high schools was made due to the fact that there was a lack of English related information. These students were chosen from the third semester English courses which also had final high school English grades from Spring, 1972. The grades were taken from the third semester students because it would generate the largest span of time to show the progress of the students.

However, as reported in Table 4, only 73 percent of the students increased their English proficiency by one-third or better. The second criterion of success as specified in the Evaluation Design prepared by the Bureau of Educational Research was for 90 percent or more to increase in English proficiency. Hence, our conclusions must be tempered by the fact that while the students showed a statistically significant gain it was not sufficient to meet the second and higher standard of having 90 percent of the students improving their English proficiency by one-third or better. On this basis the program was judged to have been moderately successful in helping children, many just recently entered into this country from China and Hong Kong, to increase their English skills. Perhaps this is a reasonable attainment. It should be noted that many of the students in the school are there because of their rather serious language deficiencies. One of the major objectives of the LESP project is remedial inadequacies. In this regard, the data in Table 3 provide some evidence that the program was a success, however not to the degree originally anticipated in the Evaluation Design.

Improvement in Attendance Patterns

Objective 3:

As indicated in Table 5, the students served in the LESP who were previous dropouts from public school, exhibited an average absentee rate of 37 percent prior to their dropping out -- in other words, they missed on the average, more than one out of every three days of school. After being placed in the LESP their absentee rate dropped down to less than 8 percent, a dramatic and significant ($p < .05$ level) improvement in attendance patterns. This represented nearly an 80 percent improvement in attendance rate.

Table 5

Average Absenteeism Rates in Public Schools Prior to Dropping Out (1971-72) and During Year in LESP (1972-73)

N = 61				
Same Subjects				
Comparable Average Percent of Days Missed				
1971-72 Average %	S.D.	1972-73 Average %	S.D.	<u>t</u>
39.2	22.2	8.2	2.56	10.41*

*Statistically significant $p < .05$ level t test, differences in proportions N = 61 (includes all students on whom 1971-72 data were available; excludes 39 students who recently entered the U.S.A. or for other reasons 1971-72 data were not available).

During 1971-72 there was an average of 91 days per semester for the high school system. The LESP had an average of 55 days per tri-semester during the 1972-73 school year. In 1971-72 the students who attended high school averaged 35.67 days absent for a percentage of 39.2 percent. The period 1972-73 students at LESP averaged 4.51 days absent for a percentage of 8.2 percent, thus reducing the rate of absenteeism by 74.4 percent.

Improvement in Subject Matter Areas

Objective 4:

The data reported in Table 6 shows that students significantly improved only in English 4 and U.S. History during the first semester of the school year. In Algebra 1, Biology, Chemistry, Geometry and World History there was no significant improvement although the differences tended to show a positive inclination. Even though there was no significant improvement,

the students overall showed a percentage improvement of 41 percent of which is well above the criterion required. The requested percentage improvement stated in the evaluation objective was 25 percent.

Table 6

Pre and Post Differences in Achievement on Subject Matter Tests: First Trimester (Percentile Rank)

	N	Pre $\bar{X}$	S.D.	Post $\bar{X}$	S.D.	t
Algebra I	8	23.63	8.40	36.63	11.60	1.75 N.S.
Biology	8	6.38	2.48	10.50	2.60	1.81 N.S.
Chemistry I & II	6	21.50	5.65	28.17	7.45	1.27 N.S.
English 4	14	31.90	3.51	36.71	3.45	2.22*
English 7 & 8	3	34.70	2.75	47.80	1.10	**
Geometry	6	32.93	4.27	37.92	6.99	1.44 N.S.
U.S. History	11	28.45	2.49	34.45	2.48	3.19*
World History	11	31.18	1.99	32.36	1.54	.48 N.S.

*Significant gain, $p < .05$

**Group too small to be analyzed

N.S. - Not significant

The data reported in Table 7 shows that the students significantly improved in general science and algebra 2. There were too few subjects in Spanish and biology to conduct tests of difference and interpret. Overall, the students in the second trimester improved their subject matter performance by 41 percent which was beyond the 25 percent improvement criterion for success.

Table 7

Pre and Post Differences in Achievement on Subject Matter Tests: Second Trimester (Percentile Rank)

	N	Pre $\bar{X}$	S.D.	Post $\bar{X}$	S.D.	t
Algebra 2	7	9.57	4.11	16.14	4.18	3.41*
Biology 2	3					**
Chemistry	6	21.50	5.65	28.16	7.45	1.27N N.S.
Economics	5	21.00	8.86	4.40	6.40	2.09
English Literature						***
General Science	12	32.33	5.51	45.33	3.35	3.04*
Spanish 1	2					**
U.S. History						***
World Geography	8	34.00	5.07	54.00	7.25	1.68 N.S.

*Statistically significant $p < .05$

**Group too small to be analyzed

***No post test data available

Average percentage of improvement in subject matter proficiency was 41 percent.

It appears, based on the data reported in Table 8, that the students made gains in subject matter achievement during the third semester. In the crucial area of English proficiency the students made significant gains of 55 percent, well above the criterion of 25 percent set in the funding proposals and evaluation designs.

Table 8

Pre and Post Differences in Achievement on Subject Matter Tests: Third Trimester

Subject	N	Pre $\bar{X}$	S.D.	Post $\bar{X}$	S.D.	t
English 4, 7, 8	34	50.24	12.56	78.00	25.92	4.36*
General Science	4					**
Literature	4					**
Algebra 2	7			(no post test available)		
Biology 2	5					**
Algebra 4	2					**
Geometry 2	(no pre data available)					
Spanish 2	1					**
Spanish 6	2					**
U.S. History 2	2					**
World History 2	2					**

*Significant $p < .05$

**Too few subjects in each class (ranging from 1 and to 4 and 5) to appropriately conduct t tests.

The reason for this limited number of students is that the post test were given after graduation of seniors. This resulted in gross absenteeism by lower classmen.

Average percentage improvement in English subject matter proficiency was 55 percent.

As shown in Table 9, further evidence is available that the students improved in their academic achievement. The students made statistically significant gains on the Metropolitan Achievement Tests beyond the .05 level.

In summary, it appears that the students have generally made significant gains in subject matter proficiency with only a few exceptions. It seems reasonable to conclude that the program accomplished much of what it had intended in its program for dropouts.

Table 9

Pre and Post Differences in Metropolitan Achievement Tests in Reading,
(Grade Equivalent Scores)

N = 47						
	Pre $\bar{X}$	S.D.	Post $\bar{X}$	S.D.	Post $\bar{X}$	S.D. t t
Sept., 1972	6.10	2.35	June, 1973	7.18	1.82	3.08*

*Significant beyond .05 level

Acquisition of Graduation Credits

Objective 5:

As shown in Table 10, the students did not quite improve by 40 percent in 1972-73 ($\bar{X} = 4.36$) over the number of credits for graduation they had received in 1971-72 ($\bar{X} = 3.48$). However, they did improve by nearly one full credit. They would have needed to have improved by 1.4 credits to meet the 40 percent criterion. Perhaps this criterion, which was set prior to knowing the exact previous credit acquisition rate, was a bit high to expect. It is clear that the improvement in credit acquisition for graduation did occur at a statistically significant level beyond .05 level. Hence, we conclude that the students were improving in their rate of progress toward graduation even if it was not 40 percent.

Table 10

Average Number of Credits for Graduation Obtained in School Years 1971-72
and 1972-73

N = 85						
	1971-72		1972-73			<u>t</u>
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Percent Decrease	
Credits Earned	3.48	1.35	4.36	1.8	28	2.64*

The average gain in credits was .88. In other words, the students gained on the average nearly one full subject credit more in 1972-73, than they did in 1971-72. However, this gain was less than the 40 percent improvement criterion set in the Evaluation Design.

*Significant beyond .05 level

Chapter V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

1. In terms of actual practices, the courses offered, the numbers served, the backgrounds of the students and the expressions of goals, it was observed that the program's functioned in accord with program plan as stated in funding requests.
2. The students in the Lower East Side Preparatory School indicated very positive attitudes toward the school, the school staff and their school experiences. (See Tables 1 and 2.) For example, not one student of 70 questioned indicated that they would like the program ended or curtailed. The students were overwhelmingly positive in spite of the fact that about 42 percent felt that the school work was not easy.
3. The staff attitudes expressed to the Teaching and Learning Research Corp. staff about the Lower East Side Preparatory School were generally favorable. No one strength was commonly given by all or most staff members. Some favored the small classes, others the close contact with administration as well as students; others the relative ease with which the program could be adapted or modified to meet emergency needs; others liked the non-traditional informal manner of the school; and still others saw the major strength of the program as the student-teacher activities outside of the classroom. A few negative assessments of the program were offered but there was no consensus. What consensus there was focused on the limited facilities of the school which in one sense is a compliment suggesting doing more and not restricting what is currently being done. The only negative criticisms made, by more than a couple of persons were that the faculty needed a greater role in the formulation of curriculum and the need for greater support from the total faculty. However, it should be noted that these negative views were not made by most of the staff.

The recommendations of the staff were clearly of one sort and involved expanding the facilities, program and numbers served. As to the current program, no consensus or agreement for improving the program was observed. A general satisfaction was expressed by the overwhelming majority of faculty.

4. The "English As A Second Language" students, as a group, significantly increased (beyond the 95 percent confidence level) their proficiency in English. In other words, one of the major objectives of the program was being met. However, this conclusion must be tempered by the fact that another original criterion set for this objective -- that 90 percent of these students increase their proficiency by 33 percent or more -- was not met. Among the students in this study, 73 percent made such large gains.

5. The students of the LESP increased their language ability as shown in table 4. An average difference of 10 points were shown in pre and post scores. Pre scores being final semester at respective high schools and post scores being final markings at LESP showing an adequate improvement in their ability to write better and understand English rules that are pertinent in the use of the English language. This data, combined with the information in statement 4, gives us a clear indication that students attending the LESP School have made significant increases in their language ability.
6. Absenteeism was significantly ($p < .05$ level) and dramatically reduced from the pre Lower East Side Preparatory School period where students tended to be absent 37 percent of the time to an average absenteeism rate of 7.6 percent, which in effect represents nearly an 80 percent improvement in the attendance rate. (See Table 5.)
7. The students in the Lower East Side Preparatory School tended to increase in subject matter proficiency above criteria established in refunding requests. The improvement was statistically significant ($p < .05$ level) in all subject areas except for biology and chemistry in the first trimester. It should be noted that there were insufficient members with both pre and post data available in all classes to assess every class. The overall percentage improvement in subject areas was 41 percent in the first trimester, 41 percent in the second trimester and 55 percent in the third trimester. Further evidence of the students academic growth was shown by the pre and post Metropolitan Achievement Test differences which were statistically significant beyond the .05 level. Clearly the program did achieve its objective of helping students to improve in subject matter areas.
8. The students increased their rate of acquiring credits for graduation in 1972-73 ($\bar{X}$ credits earned 4.36) over that of the year prior to dropping out, at a statistically significant level (1971-72; $\bar{X}$ credits earned 3.48) ($p < .05$ level). This improvement was less than the criterion of 40 percent improvement presented in funding requests. However, the students increased their rate of progress by nearly one full credit (.88) in only one year.

1. It is concluded that the Lower East Side Preparatory School is providing the basic educational requirements for high school graduation to its students. There was a clear increase for these students in the 1972-73 school year over the year prior to their entering the Prep School, 1971-72, in their rate of acquiring credits for graduation.
2. It is also concluded that concomitant effects of the Lower East Side Preparatory School, to providing the educational requirements for graduation, were reducing absenteeism, enhancing student attitudes toward school, improving language skills and subject matter proficiencies and providing a dedicated staff with generally high morale.
3. It is, in summary, concluded that the Lower East Side Preparatory School functioned in accord with the program plan as was specified in the funding requests.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the program be continued in 1973-74. This is based upon the above findings, that the Lower East Side Preparatory School did function in accord with the plan as specified in the funding proposal and that the program did achieve its objective in reducing absenteeism, increasing achievement in major subject areas, fostering positive student attitudes toward school and school staff, maintaining support among faculty and community agency personnel, helping "English As A Second Language" students to become more proficient in English, and assisting students to make progress in their rate of credit acquisition toward graduation.
2. If the program is expanded, the school should remain in the same neighborhood. The current enthusiasm among the students for the school might be jeopardized if the current site were changed so as to cause students to commute.



LOWER EAST SIDE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Student Questionnaire

Name _____ Class _____

School _____

Circle the answer that tells how you feel.

- | | | | |
|---|-----|-----------|----|
| 1. The teachers in this school want to help you. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 2. The teachers in this school expect you to work too hard. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 3. The teachers in this school are really interested in you. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 4. The teachers in this school know how to explain things clearly. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 5. The teachers in this school are fair and square. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 6. The boys and girls in this school fight too much. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 7. This school building is a pleasant place. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 8. The principal in this school is friendly. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 9. The work at this school is too hard. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 10. What I am learning will be useful to me. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 11. I wish I didn't have to go to school at all. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 12. This is the best school I know. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 13. The work at this school is too easy. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 14. I work hard in school but don't seem to get anywhere. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 15. I've learned more this year than any earlier year. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 16. When I graduate from high school I intend to go to college. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |
| 17. I would like to have this program continued to help other dropout students like me. | YES | SOMETIMES | NO |



APPENDIX B
LOWER EAST SIDE PREPARATORY SCHOOL
Staff Sheet

Name of Staff Member _____

Title _____

School _____

Class or Grade _____

Language _____

Number of years in this position _____

Dialect _____

Highest educational level _____

Fields of specialization _____



APPENDIX C

LOWER EAST SIDE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Staff Interview Schedule

In our final evaluation report, we would like to include what you think are the major strengths and weaknesses of the Prep School, as well as your recommendations. If you would briefly list your views this would be greatly appreciated. We will not report your name or position in the report. All information from school personnel will be grouped. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Please briefly list what you think are five or six strong points about the School. Kindly be as specific as possible.

(a) _____
(b) _____
(c) _____
(d) _____
(e) _____
(f) _____

2. Please briefly list what you think are the weakest aspects of the School.

3. Please briefly recommend what you think would help the Prep School program.



APPENDIX D

LOWER EAST SIDE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Administrators Sheet

Goals of the Program

1. What do you see are the goals of the program as implemented in your school?

2. What problems have you encountered in implementing those goals?
